

Message Text

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PLEASE PASS WHITE HOUSE
FROM AMBASSADOR BREWSTER

E.O. 11652: N/A 11652
TAGS: PGOV, SOPN
SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL INTERVIEW PROPOSAL

1. INDEPENDENT TELEVISION NEWS (ITN), THE NEWS
AFFILIATE OF THE BRITISH INDEPENDENT (COMMERCIAL)
TELEVISION NETWORK, HAS EXTENDED AN INVITATION FOR WHAT
I BELIEVE TO BE THE BEST U.K. MEDIA OPPORTUNITY
PERTAINING TO THE PRESIDENT SINCE MY ARRIVAL IN THIS
COUNTRY A YEAR AGO. IN A LETTER TO ME, ITN EDITOR,
DAVID NICHOLAS, PROPOSES AN INTERVIEW WITH THE PRESIDENT
TO TAKE PLACE BEFORE THE BONN SUMMIT IN JULY.

2. WHILE RECOGNIZING THE DIFFICULTY OF ACCOMMODATING
THIS REQUEST I WOULD LIKE, NEVERTHELESS, TO GIVE IT MY
STRONG ENDORSEMENT.

3. IT PROVIDES AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO BUILD ON
THE VERY FAVORABLE BRITISH REACTION TO THE PRESIDENT'S
ANNAPOLIS SPEECH AND THE GREAT INTEREST HERE IN WORLD
ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, EAST-WEST RELATIONS, AFRICA AND OTHER
ASPECTS OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS. PRIOR TO THE ANNAPOLIS
SPEECH, THERE HAD BEEN IN THIS COUNTRY SIGNIFICANT

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CRITICISM OF THE PRESIDENT AND HIS POLICIES,
PARTICULARLY IN CONSERVATIVE CIRCLES AND ON THE PART OF
THE PRESS THAT REFLECTS THEIR VIEWS. THE ANNAPOLIS
SPEECH MUTED THIS CRITICISM AND HAS BEGUN TO TURN IT
AROUND. THE INTERVIEW PROPOSED BY ITN COULD BE
EXTREMELY USEFUL IN MAINTAINING THE FAVORABLE MOMENTUM.

4. IN EFFECT, THE INTERVIEW WOULD BE A SPECIAL CONNECTED WITH THEIR NIGHTLY NETWORK SHOW "NEWS AT TEN" WHICH, ALONG WITH THE BBC'S COUNTERPART, HAS THE LARGEST AUDIENCE OF ANY NEWS PROGRAM IN THE U.K. VIEWERS ESTIMATED 10 MILLION. FOR SUCH A SPECIAL, WHICH WOULD BE HEAVILY PUBLICIZED, THE EXPECTED AUDIENCE COULD BE EVEN LARGER.

5. THE INTERVIEW WOULD BE CONDUCTED BY THEIR SENIOR NEWSCASTER, ALASTAIR BURNET, FORMER EDITOR OF THE ECONOMIST MAGAZINE AND THE DAILY EXPRESS NEWSPAPER. BURNET HAS LONG BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH ITN AND HAS BEEN THE ANCHORMAN OF THEIR BRITISH ELECTION PROGRAMS SINCE THE EARLY 1960S. HE HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN REPORTING THE AMERICAN SCENE THROUGHOUT HIS JOURNALISTIC CAREER AND HAS FREQUENTLY VISITED THE U.S. AS A LECTURER. HE ALSO IS PROMINENT IN THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION. WHILE A PROBING QUESTIONER, HE CAN BE EXPECTED TO BE STRAIGHT-FORWARD AND FAIR.

6. AS ITN POINTS OUT, THE PRECISE FORM OF SUCH AN INTERVIEW COULD BE DISCUSSED IN DETAIL SHOULD A FAVORABLE DECISION BE MADE. THEY FEEL THAT A FULL THIRTY-MINUTE INTERVIEW WOULD BE IDEAL. I SHARE THIS VIEW. IF THIS WERE CONSIDERED TOO DEMANDING ON THE PRESIDENT'S TIME, THEN A TEN-MINUTE SESSION FOR INCLUSION IN AN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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EXTENDED NIGHTLY NEWS PROGRAM ALSO WOULD BE AGREEABLE TO THEM. WHETHER THE SUBJECT COVERED WOULD BE CONFINED TO ECONOMIC PROSPECTS OR RANGE OVER A WIDER SPECTRUM, INCLUDING INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS IN GENERAL, SOUTHERN AFRICA, ETC., COULD ALSO BE A MATTER FOR DISCUSSION, ITN POINTS OUT. I BELIEVE THE WIDER DISCUSSION WOULD BE MOST PROFITABLE HERE.

7. MAKING THE IDEA ADDITIONALLY ATTRACTIVE IS ITN'S SUGGESTION THAT IT WOULD BE PLEASED TO MAKE ANY INTERVIEW WITH THE PRESIDENT AVAILABLE TO OTHER BROADCASTERS THROUGH EUROVISION; THEIR ANGLO-AMERICAN SUBSIDIARY NEWSFILM COMPANY, UPITN, AND TO THE AMERICAN NETWORKS. IF VIEWED IN THE U.S. THE INTERVIEW WITH A DISTINGUISHED FOREIGN COMMENTATOR SHOULD ENHANCE AMERICAN RESPECT FOR AND PRIDE IN THEIR PRESIDENT'S ROLE AS AN INTERNATIONAL STATESMAN.

8. I WOULD APPRECIATE GUIDANCE FOR REPLY TO ITN.
BREWSTER

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